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Of CHRIST's Kingdom.

A
S E R M O N

Preach'd at the

A S S I Z E S

HELD AT

G U I L F O R D,

JULY 24. 1704.

By the Right Honourable

The L^d Chief-Justice *HOLT*,

AND

Mr. Justice *GOLD*.

By *R. DUKE*, Prebendary of *Gloucester*, and
Rector of *Blaby* in *Leicestershire*.

Published at the Desire of the *High-Sheriff* and *Grand-Jury*

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STERN

FOR

The Chief Justice

Mr. Justice

By J. B. A. Secretary of Court

Published at the Office of the Secretary of Court

Printed by J. B. A. Secretary of Court

T O

JAMES TICHBORNE Esq;
High-Sheriff of the County of Surrey,

AND TO

The Gentlemen of the Grand-Jury of the said County,

Sir Richard Onslowe Bar ^t	Henry Fendal Esq;
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John Pettiward Esq;	Richard Bridgier Gent.
Thomas Lowfield Esq;	

I Here present to You that Discourse which
You were so favourable as to hear, not with
Patience only, but with Satisfaction too;
which you were pleas'd to express, when you
laid your Commands upon me (much against my

DEDICATION.

Inclination) to make it Public. Whoever reads the Names of so many Honourable Persons as are here prefix'd, will own, that it was not in my Power to Disobey, what You were so kind as to call only a Request; and therefore whatever Faults he may find in the Performance, must needs pardon the Publication: Which I my self am the less averse to, when I consider, how great Advantage the Truths herein deliver'd (however weakly or unskilfully) will receive, from being Openly Own'd and approv'd by Persons of Your Rank and Character; and also, that I have hereby an Opportunity, of making a Public Acknowledgment of the Extraordinay Civility and Favours, by You shewn to

Your Most Obedient,

AND

Humble Servant,

R. Duke.

JOHN XVIII. 36.

Jesus answer'd, My Kingdom is not of this World.

NEVER did the Enemies of the Gospel contrive so malicious an Accusation, nor indeed, if it had been true, could have rais'd a more just Argument against our most Holy and Pure and Peaceable Religion, than that which was so frequently, but so falsely urg'd against our Saviour himself and his Apostles, at their first Preaching and Publishing of it to the World. Namely, that it was a Turbulent and Seditious Religion, and that the Spreaders of it were the Disturbers of States and Kingdoms, and the known Destroyers, wheresoever they came, of the common Peace and Quiet of Mankind. Thus the *Jews* at the Preaching of St. Paul at *Thessalonica*, tho' they themselves were in an open Riot; for they took unto them, as the Text says, certain Acts xvii. Lewd Fellows of the baser sort, and gather'd a Company, and set all the City in an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason; yet had the Impudence to accuse St. Paul and his Companions, of the Crime which themselves were at that time actually guilty of; crying, *these that have* — v. 6. *turn'd the World upside down are come hither also; and these all do contrary to the Decrees of Caesar, saying, that there is* — v. 7.

B

another

another King, one Jesus. But how innocent was that Apostle of the Crime laid to his charge? Who ever was a more zealous Assertor of the Necessity of Subjection to Higher Powers, than he? He whom we find, not long after, declaring in his defence, against the like many and grievous Complaints of the same

Acts xxv. 7. *Jews, which, as it is there said, they could not prove; that as he had done nothing either against Cæsar, or the Laws; so if he had done any thing of that nature, he did not refuse to die. But it is enough for the Disciple, that he be as his Master, and the Servant as his Lord; if they call'd the Master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?* St. Paul therefore might well endure to be thus us'd, to be call'd a

Acts xxiv. 1. *pestilent Fellow, and a Mover of Sedition; since no kinder Usage, or better Language had been before the Lot of his Blessed Lord, who was accus'd by the clamorous Multitude in the same strain; We found this Fellow per-*

Luk. xxii. 2. *verting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar; saying, that he himself is Christ a King.* But how notoriously false, in every particular, was this Accusation! Instead of setting himself up for King, he fled, and hid himself from those that would by Force have made him so. Instead of forbidding to give Tribute, he

Joh. vi 15. *gave the most public and solemn Determination, that the things that are Cæsar's should be render'd unto Cæsar, as conscienciously, as to God the things that are God's:* And rather than He or any of his Followers should be thought to refuse Payment, he exerted his Divine Power at the expence of a Miracle, to procure Tribute-

Mat. xxii. 21. *money for himself and Peter, out of the depth of the Sea.*

Matt. xvii. 27.

Thus

Thus this Charge of Enmity to *Cæsar*, and Disturbance of the State, wherewith the Gospel of Christ was at it's first setting forth so blasphem'd, by the uexampl'd Meekness of our Saviour, and the Peaceableness of his Doctrine, and the inoffensive Carriage of those that were the first Teachers and Learners of it, was visibly confuted, and utterly overthrown. But that we may the better understand the Ground of all these false Accusations, and give some account, how the most Meek and Humble Preacher, of the most Self-denying and Peaceable Religion that ever was known in the World, could be charg'd with Sedition and Rebellion, with Disobedience to *Cæsar*, and Aspiring to a Kingdom; or, if any such Charge should by the Malice of his Enemies be preferr'd, how it was possible that it should by any, even the most corrupt Court of Justice, be admitted and favour'd; we must take notice, that upon the time of our Saviour's appearing in the flesh, the Minds of Men were generally possess'd with an Opinion that highly conduc'd to promote and gain Credit to such an Accusation, howsoever otherwise improbable and absurd. For it is most certain, that the whole Nation of the *Jews* were then in earnest and instant expectation of their *Messiah*; all their Prophecies pointed at this very Time, *When the Lord should suddenly come to his Temple. When the Desire of all nations should fill that House with his Glory, and make the Glory of that House greater than that of the former.* And so far they were exceedingly in the right, this, and no other, was the Time, in which their most earnest Longings, now more than ever awaken'd and enflam'd, might have

Mal.iii. 1.

Hag. ii. 7,

--- 9.

receiv'd their full Satisfaction in the Presence of their so long promis'd King. But their fatal Mistake was this, (which also blinded their Eyes from seeing his proper Glory and true Majesty) they had, from the Prophetical Descriptions of the Reign of the *Messiah* grossly misunderstood, form'd to themselves, in their Carnal Imaginations, a *Messiah* quite different from what the true meaning of those Prophecies foretold, not a Spiritual, but a Temporal Prince; one that should Restore to *Israel* the Kingdom that the *Romans* had taken from them, that should Reign with all Secular Pomp and Power in the Throne of *David*; and, having subdu'd the rest of the World to himself, make *Jerusalem* the Seat of an Universal Monarchy. For this they waited impatiently, as many as look'd for *Redemption in Jerusalem*. This was so generally believ'd and expected, that even those that had been daily Hearers of his most Meek and Self-denying Doctrine, that were admitted to the nearest Attendance upon him, nay the intimatest Friendship with him, could not, till the Holy Ghost himself came down upon 'em to lead 'em into all Truth, relinquish so deeply rooted a Prejudice. 'Twas from this vain Conceit, and in prospect of his Temporal Grandeur, that the Mother of *Zebedee's* Children sued to him for the Preferment of her Sons, with an Eye to this Secular Dominion the Apostles debated so earnestly among themselves, which of them should be greatest; and after his Resurrection, with somewhat of Impatience ask'd him, *Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the Kingdom to Israel?* Neither was this Expectation of some extraordinary Person, at this time to come

Luk. ii.
38.

Acts i. 6.

come into the World, who should be the Founder of a New and most Powerful Empire, confin'd to the *Jewish* Nation only, but was spread over the whole *Roman* Dominions, of which we have sufficient Proof in that famous Eclogue of *Virgil*, borrow'd from the *Sibylline* Verses, which were as plainly borrow'd from *Isaiah's* Prophecy; and again in his *Æneid*, where he applies this generally receiv'd Prediction to *Augustus*, as he had before done it to *Saloninus*: Neither was the Time only mark'd out, but even the Place, from whence this great Empire was to take its Rise, by a Tradition which had long prevail'd over a great part of the World. For *Suetonius* tells us, that there had been an antient and constantly receiv'd Opinion throughout all the *East*, that it was by the Fates ordain'd, that about that time there should come out of *Judea*, those who were to be Lords of the Universe. And 'tis probable, that the *Wise Men of the East*, where this Tradition was of so long standing and universal Credit, might upon it ground their Question, *Where is He that is born King of the Jews*. Certainly *Herod* could not have been so much troubled at the Report of their giving this Title to an Infant newly and obscurely born, if the general Expectation of a Mighty Monarch then to appear, had not made him more than ordinary apprehensive and solicitous for his own Kingdom; so far as to be transported to that barbarous and inhuman Cruelty of murdering so many Innocent Children, in hopes thereby to have secur'd himself from this New-born King.

Eclog. 4.

Æneid. 6.

In Vita
Vespas.

Mat. ii. 2.

This

This Opinion so generally receiv'd, the Malice of the *Jews* made use of against our Saviour, accusing him, contrary to the clearest Knowledge and fullest Conviction of their own Minds, of affecting such a Sovereignty, as, if he really had pretended to, they would have been the forwardest to have abetted him in his Pretensions. For the chief Reason of their disowning him for their *Messiah*, was, his not appearing in the Splendor of Worldly Greatness, and the Majesty of a Prince; and the Contempt and Hatred of him, which urg'd 'em at last to accuse him that he *did*, was at first rais'd in 'em, because he *did not* make himself a King. How false soever they knew this Charge to be, they doubted not but it would take effect, this Article therefore they press, this they urge and insist upon against him, with this they frighten the Roman Governour to a Compliance, crying out,

Jo. xix. 12. *If thou let this Man go, thou art not Cæsar's Friend; whosoever maketh himself a King, speaketh against Cæsar.*

Our Blessed Saviour being in this manner accus'd, and thereupon examin'd by *Pilat*, and press'd to answer whether he was a King? as he does not positively own, so by no means does he disown himself to be so. He rather seems to give an imply'd Consent to the terms of the Accusation, if rightly understood; to the Question, *Art thou a King?* several times repeated, answering no more than this, *Thou say'st it*; not shewing the least Dislike, but rather intimating his Approbation of *Pilat's* giving him that Title: And herein, as the Apostle speaks, *He witness'd a good Confession.* For he knew himself to be indeed a King, a greater King than

1 Tim. vi. 13.

than *Pilat* represented, Lord of a far more Glorious and Powerful Empire than *Cesar* ever possess'd; an Empire by infinite degrees larger in Extent, and longer in Duration, as wide as Heaven and Earth, and as lasting as Eternity. But to shew the Falshood and Malice of his present Accusers, and to obviate all Pretences of his future Subjects (which upon his Title they might advance to Secular Dominion) to prevent for ever all mistakes concerning his Kingdom, he declares in the Words of my Text, that his Regal Power was of a quite different Nature from what the Princes of this World exercis'd or understood, *My Kingdom is not of this World.*

From which Words I shall endeavour to shew.

I. *First*, That Christ is truly a King.

II. *Secondly*, That his Kingdom does not by any means interfere with or disturb, much less dissolve or destroy the Kingdoms of this World.

III. *Thirdly*, What Influence the Consideration of Christ's Heavenly Kingdom ought to have over all those, who have either the Supreme Power or Subordinate Administration in any of the Kingdoms upon Earth.

I. I shall begin with the First, namely, That Christ is truly a King, and that he undoubtedly is in a two-fold respect, that is, whether we consider him as God or Christ.

1. If we consider our Saviour as God, the Second Person in the Ever-blessed Trinity, whose Glory with the Father's is Equal, and Majesty Coeternal; we must needs allow him to be King both of Heaven
and

and Earth; and that, first by Right of Creation, the most undoubted Ground of Propriety, and consequently of Power : This is the Acknowledgment of the four and twenty Elders in the *Revelations*, before him that sat upon the Throne, *casting down their Crowns before the Throne, and saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive Glory and Honour and Power, for thou hast created all things, and for thy Pleasure they are, and were created.* And secondly, by his actual taking upon himself the Administration and Government of the World; *The Lord has prepared his Throne in Heaven, and his Kingdom ruleth over all;* and in another *Psalms*, *The Lord reigneth, let the Earth rejoice;* and in another, *The Lord reigneth, let the People tremble;* and in several other places of Scripture, so obvious that it is needless, so numerous that it were endless to recite them.

2. But it is not in this Sense that we are here to understand our Saviour to be a King; the Kingdom of his which in the Text is properly meant, is his Mediatorial Kingdom, that belongs to him as he is Christ, God and Man, the *Messias*, the Anointed of the Lord : Of whom God speaks in the second *Psalms*, *I have set my King upon my Holy Hill of Sion : To whom holy David addresseth himself, with so much Rapture, and in so sublime a Strain, through the whole forty-fifth Psalm, Thy Throne O God is forever and ever, the Sceptre of thy Kingdom is a right Sceptre; thou lovest Righteousness and hatest Wickedness, therefore God, thy God hath anointed thee with the Oil of Gladness above thy fellows : Of whom the Angel told the Virgin, Thou shalt bring forth a Son, and shalt call his name Jesus : He shall be Great,*
and

and shall be call'd the Son of the Highest, and the Lord shall give unto him the Throne of his Father David; and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his Kingdom shall be no end.

He was indeed born a King, and the very Conjunction of his Humane Nature to the Divine, was a sufficient Unction to his Regal Office. But as David, his Type and Father, for several years after his being not only design'd by God, but also anointed by Samuel to be King over Israel, took not on him the Regal Dignity, but continu'd as a Private Man in Hebron; so Christ himself for some time, during the state of his Humiliation, shew'd no outward Signs of Dominion, nor exercis'd any part of his Kingly Power, till after his Resurrection from the Dead: Then he first assumes the Exercise of his Rightful Authority, then he declares to his Apostles the Plenitude and Extent of his Power; *All Power is given me, both in Heaven and in Earth*: Then he gives them this ample Commission, *Go ye therefore and make Disciples of all Nations, Baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you; and lo I am with you always, to the End of the World.* This was his first Act of Royalty which he did then most justly exercise; as lawful Princes do several Acts of Power, before the Ceremony of their Coronation. But his solemn Inauguration was not celebrated till his Ascension into Heaven, and sitting down at the Right Hand of the Father. This was our Lord's open and triumphant Accession to the Throne, this the glorious man-

Ma. xxviii.
18.

---19, 20.

ner of taking Possession of his Kingdom. A Kingdom prepared indeed for him before the Foundation of the World, but actually conferr'd upon him by the Father
 Eph. i. 17, 20, 21, 22. of Glory; then, when he rais'd him from the dead, and set him at his own Right Hand in the Heavenly Places. Far above all Principality and Power and Might and Dominion, and every Name that is nam'd, not only in this World, but also in that which is to come; and has put all things under his Feet, and gave him to be Head over all things to the Church: For that is his peculiar Kingdom; and as before his Incarnation, tho' as Son of God, he reign'd Universal King of all the Earth, (for what the Father works, as Lord and King over all, he from the beginning work'd, not without, but by the Son;) and yet then out of all the Kingdoms of the Earth, over which he had an equal and absolute Dominion, he chose one only Nation to be his peculiar People; and Jerusalem particularly had the Honourable Title of the City of the Great King: So
 Psa. xlviii. 2. now, and ever since his Exaltation to his Heavenly Kingdom, wherein, as Son of Man, he sits and reigns Sovereign Lord over all, tho' the whole World is equally subject to his Power, yet in a more eminent manner, and by distinguishing Grace, his Church is his proper Kingdom; and tho' he truly is, what he is
 Mat. v. 35. stiled in the Revelations, Prince of the Kings of the Earth, yet his peculiar Glory, and the Title that he delights in, is, what he is in the same Book call'd by,
 Revel. i. 5. the King of Saints. He has therefore a double Kingdom; that of Power, to which the whole Creation is subject, and that of Propriety, to which, by a nearer and dearer Relation, his Elect only appertain. None
 can

can possibly be exempted from the first, but happy are they who have an Interest in the second; begun here in Grace, but to be perfected hereafter in Glory! All the Powers of the Visible or Invisible World, all the Temporal or Spiritual Enemies of this Kingdom are yet now rightfully subject to him; and shall, whenever he pleases, be effectually subdu'd by him. For nothing in Earth or Hell itself is out of the reach of his Dominion, or of Force against his Might, and *he must reign till he has put all things under his Feet.* But his Dominion over these, is as over Rebels; and for all those that refuse to submit to his Sceptre of Righteousness, he has a Rod of Iron, *wherewith he will break them in pieces like a Potter's Vessel.* But over all those that receive his Gospel, call'd in Scripture *the Gospel of the Kingdom*, over all that believe in his Word, and obey his Commands, that gladly embrace his Holy Faith, and willingly submit to his Righteous Laws; over these he reigns as over his Loyal and Loving and Beloved Subjects; these are the true Members of his Heavenly Kingdom, as obedient to the Laws, so entituled to the Privileges of the Holy City above; already *Fellow-Citizens of the Saints, Partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light; whom God has delivered from the Power of Darkneß, and hath translated into the Kingdom of his dear Son.* They are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the City of the Living God, the Heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable Company of Angels, to the general Assembly and Church of the First-born, who are written in Heaven; and to GOD the Judge of all, and to the Spirits of just Men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the New

1 Cor. xv.
25.

Heb. i. 8.

Psal. ii. 9.

Mat. iv. 23.

Eph. ii. 19.
Col. i. 12,
13.Heb. xii.
22-24.

Covenant. In a word, they are of that Myſtical Body which we term the Church of Chriſt, and are thence ſaid a little after, to have *receiv'd a Kingdom which cannot be moved.* Chriſt therefore is undoubtedly a King, and his Church is his peculiar Kingdom, a Kingdom, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, *that cannot be moved.* But ſuch no Earthly Kingdom is, or can be: So that we might, even from hence, tho' we had no other Reaſons, tho' we had not our Saviour's own Word for it in the Text, conclude, that *His Kingdom is not of this World.*

Which leads me to the Second Thing propos'd.

II. To ſhew, that Chriſt's Kingdom does not interfere with or diſturb, much leſs diſſolve or deſtroy the Kingdoms of the Earth.

Pſa. ii. 1, 2. Why then did the Heathen rage, and the People imagine vain things? The Kings of the Earth, why did they ſtand up?
Acts iv. 25, -- 27. Why were the Rulers gather'd together againſt the Lord and his Chriſt? as David by the Spirit ſpoke, For of a truth, againſt this Holy Child Jeſus, whom God anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the
Acts liii. 15. People of Iſrael were gathered together; and kill'd the Prince of Life. Why? but, Becauſe they knew him not,
Acts xliii. -- 27. nor the Voice of the Prophets, which yet they fulfill'd in condemning him: Nor the Nature of his Kingdom;
1 Cor. ii. 8. Which none of the Princes of this World knew, for had they known it, they would not have crucify'd the Lord of Glory. To which purpoſe ſpeaks that Hymn of Sedulius, admitted of Old, and ſung in the Church:

Hoſtis

Hostis Herodes Impie,
 Christum venire quid times?
 Non eripit mortalia
 Qui Regna dat cœlestia.

*Why rages Herod, because Christ appears?
 Impious his Rage, as groundless are his Fears;
 He that the Heavenly Kingdom does bestow,
 Takes not away, nor alters those below.*

He came indeed to be a Redeemer and Deliverer, but the Tyranny and Bondage that he was to rescue his Subjects from, was not their due Obedience to Temporal Governours, but the insupportable Yoke of their Spiritual Enemies, Sin and Satan and Death. These Enemies he came to subdue, and has subdu'd, and continues to subdue! *He is gone forth*, Rev. vi. 2. *conquering and to conquer*; but not with the Arm of Flesh, but the Sword of the Spirit; for the *Weapons* 2 Cor. x. 4. *of his Warfare are not Carnal*, tho' they are *Mighty*. The way he chose both to Found and Propagate his Church, to acquire first, and then to enlarge the Bounds of his Spiritual Dominion, was first by Himself, not destroying, but dying; then, by a Noble Army indeed, but such a one as consisted of Martyrs only, and as other Conquerours boast of slaying their thousands and ten thousands; the Church of Christ on the contrary was Victorious, and triumph'd, and over-run the World, by having her **Thousands and Ten Thousands slain.**

And

And wherever *this Kingdom of Heaven* prevail'd, what Laws did it enact, but such as conduc'd to the Peace and Settlement and good Order and Security of all the *Kingdoms of the Earth*? What were the Duties it prescrib'd, but Submission and Obedience to Superiours, Humility and Condescension to Inferiours, strict Justice, and inviolable Truth, and universal Charity, unbounded Love and over-flowing Beneficence to all Mankind? Those social Virtues, to which all Communities owe not only their Well-Being, but their very Being itself; and which, exercis'd in Faith and Obedience to the Lord Christ, were thenceforth, from Natural Affections or Moral Duties, ennobled and exalted into Acts of Religion and Divine Graces.

And the Obligation to all these, was made more strong and efficacious than it could possibly be from any Human Sanction; the Performance of 'em encourag'd by the most engaging Promises, not of Temporal, but of Eternal Rewards, and the Neglect threatned with the most severe and everlasting Punishments, with a Forfeiture of the Heavenly Inheritance, and an utter Exclusion from this Glorious Kingdom. And these Rewards to be bestow'd, and these Punishments to be inflicted by an All-seeing Judge, that *searches the Heart, and weigheth the Spirits, and tries the Reins, and understandeth the Thoughts a far off*. Such a Prince only as this can require Truth in the inward Parts, give Laws to the Mind and Conscience, and set Rules to the secretest Wishes and Desires of the Heart. Christ our King does this, and whatever Actions are in the Eye of Human Justice, or these out-ward

Jer. xvii.
10.

Prov. xvi.
2.

Pf. vii. 9.

Pf. cxxxix.
2.

Pf. li. 6.

ward Courts Criminal, the very Thoughts any way tending or accessory to such Acts, are in his sight of Equal Guilt. When therefore Religion has its just Force and Influence upon the Minds of Men, when the Law of Christ, which reaches the Spirit and regulates the Thoughts, and restrains the first Motions of disorderly Appetite or unruly Passion, prevails, how can it be doubted, but outward Obedience to Human Institutions will readily and easily follow? For how should he be guilty of the gross Ouvert-Act, who dares not so much as harbour the very first Inclination to it? With whom to Cover, is to Steal; to Lust, is to commit Adultery; to Hate, is to Murder; and to be Disaffected, is to Rebel? From whence we may easily perceive the infinite Advantage that accrues to Civil Government from Religion; and this, even the Atheist himself, by direct Consequence from his own Scheme of Irreligion, is forc'd to acknowledge. For when Religion is by him made only a State Contrivance, devis'd by cunning Politicians, to keep the People in a common Awe of the Magistrate, and mutual Peace among themselves; is it not at the same time confess'd to be of all things the most Beneficial to Government, the surest Bond of Obedience, and the strongest Cement of Society? With great Force and Truth therefore did the first Apologists of the Church make out to the *Roman* Emperours, that Christianity was so far from subverting their Government, that on the contrary, there was nothing that so much tended to its Quiet and Establishment. Not all their own Imperial Laws and Edicts, could so substan-

substantially provide for its Peace and Security as that. A true Christian they demonstrated to be the best Common-wealths-man, and a more dutiful Subject to *Cesar*, for his belonging to the *Kingdom of Christ*.

Justin
Martyr
Apolog.
1st. ad An-
toninum
Pium.

For as to the Accusation, which, upon this account, they lay under, common to them with their Blessed Lord; hear one of 'em thus vindicating them to *Antoninus*: When you are told that we expect a Kingdom, you make a very wrong Construction, and imagine we mean a Temporal Kingdom among Men, whereas we mean, that Kingdom wherein we shall Reign with God for ever. Which is manifest from this, that whenever we are examined, we readily confess our selves to be Christians, tho' we assuredly know that Death is the Punishment that attends that Confession. For if our Expectation were of an Earthly Kingdom, we should deny our Religion to preserve our Lives, or at least, study to lie hid till we could bring about what we expect. But, as it is, since our Hopes are not set upon things of this Life, we fear not those who are ready to take it from us.

2 Tim. iv.
7, 8.

2 Tim. iii.
3.

This was the true Spirit of Primitive Christianity, of those, whose Ambition was not fix'd on any thing Lower than Heaven, or Shorter than Eternity. A Kingdom they all waited for, and after having fought a good Fight, and finish'd their Course, and kept the Faith, they were assur'd, that for them there was a Crown laid up. But they had learn'd also, that a Man is not Crown'd except he strive lawfully. The Faith they knew, was to be kept, and propagated too, tho' a Fight for it was to be fought. But to make that a Good Fight, it was necessary, that none but Lawful Weapons should be

be us'd; no Armour, but such as was allow'd of and appointed by the Captain of their Salvation, put on. And what were those, but *Truth, and Righteousness*, Ephes. vi. *and Peace, and the Sword of the Spirit which is the Word* 14, 15. *of God?* It was not by Violence and outward Force, but by Long-suffering and Patience, by Meekness and Gentleness, by Doing all Good and Suffering all Evil that the Gospel made its way: and wherever it came it was so far from overturning, that it rather confirm'd both Private Right and Publick Authority. It brought indeed, along with it, its own Privileges and its own Laws, but confer'd not the one nor impos'd the other upon any but its own Subjects; upon none but those who were willing and glad to receive 'em, and desirous to be admitted into that Holy Kingdom; into which they, who were thus admit'ted, did not, upon that score, advance any New Pretensions to the Power or the Possessions of those that were Without. So far were they from imagining that, upon the account of their Saintship, they might claim and seize the Goods or Properties of Others, that by it, they knew they should be often obliged, which as readily they performed, to part with their Own. No Real Saint was ever so wickedly Wild (like those who have sacrilegiously usurp'd and profan'd that Name) as to pretend that his Invisible Faith gave him a Right to the Infidels Visible Estate, or that Inward Grace was the only just Title to Outward Dominion.

They were also so far from Opposing just Authority, that no Doctrine was more press'd by them than the Necessity of Subjection to the Higher Powers, and that *not for Wrath but for Conscience sake.* A new and far

Rom. xiii. -

far stronger Security to Publick Peace than all the Secu-
lar Laws in the World could ever give. And this Obe-
dience was to be Universal, to every Command, tho' ne-
ver so Difficult, or Burthenfome or Chargeable; not any
excepted, that did not manifestly oppose some known
Law of the Kingdom of Christ. Then indeed the
Rule was, and ever must be, That, tho' we Obey
Man for God's sake, we must never Disobey God for
the sake of Man. In every thing else the Christian owns
himself to be oblig'd, knowing that when by his Lord's
Command he obeys the Magistrate, he does not so
much obey the Magistrate as Him who commanded
this Obedience; and that when *he resists the Power he*
Rom. xiii.
2. *resists the Ordinance of God.* For he who is the Author
of Religion, is the Author of Magistracy too; and tho
Christ's Kingdom is not of this World, yet all the
Prov. viii.
15. Kingdoms of this World are of Christ. *By him Kings*
reign and Princes decree Justice; from him Emperours
first receive their Authority, however afterwards they
exercise it, the Bad as well as the Good, *Nero and Ti-*
berius as well as *Constantine and Theodosius.* From him
Pilat himself had the Power by which he condemn'd
him; Christ himself, when he stood before his Tribu-
Jo. xix.
11. nal, own'd as much, *Thou couldst have no Power at all*
against me, except it were given thee from Above.

And shall all Heathen Government be confess'd to
Rom. xiii.
1. be from Above! Shall *all the Powers that be*, all that
were in being when St. Paul wrote his Epistle to the
Romans be allow'd to be ordain'd of God, and shall it be
accounted unlawful for a Christian to be a Magistrate?
So wild an Opinion, is not indeed so much to be won-
der'd

der'd at from a raving Enthusiast, or frantick Fifth-Monarchy-Man: But could it be expected, that the sober Socinian, the great Pretender to right Reason and sound Judgment, should ever advance so Irrational, as well as Pernicious a *Position*? And is it not remarkable, that none but those who will admit of no Reason, and those that will admit of nothing else but Reason, did ever hold so absurd an Opinion as this to be the Doctrine of Christ? But can it be conceiv'd that he, who is the Author of all Government, should thus contradict himself, and destroy his own Institution? Or design that all the Nations that should embrace his Gospel, should either live altogether without Laws or Magistracy, or else be ever subject to Unbelievers? Or, upon the Conversion of Princes and Potentates, that those, whom their Infidelity did not, their Faith should incapacitate for Government? Can any one think, that when St. Paul, with great Address and good Manners, and all the respectful Titles due to their Place and Dignity, apply'd himself to *the most noble Festus* and *King Agrippa*; and wish'd, that *they were* ^{Acts xxvi. 25.} *altogether like himself, excepting those Bonds*; he meant to ^{--- 29.} be understood by them to wish, that the one would lay down his Government, and the other abdicate his Kingdom? I shall not waste time in Confuting an Opinion, which many, among those who formerly defended it, begin to be asham'd of; the Absurdity of it being as easie to be seen, as the Mischief of it (should it prevail) would be troublesome to be felt. Certainly, as there is no Opposition in Subordination, there can be no Contradiction, in being a King of Men, and a

Subject of Christ. Certainly it is not only lawful for a Christian to be a Magistrate, but none is so fit as a Christian to be so.

III. I come therefore in the last place to shew, What Influence Christ's Kingdom ought to have over all those who have either the Supreme Power, or Subordinate Administration in a Christian Commonwealth: What Return our Lord may justly expect from Kings, and all that are in Authority under them, out of bounden Duty, as they stand by him charg'd with the Important Trust of so Extensive a Power; out of Just Gratitude, as they are advanc'd to so August an Eminence, and God-like Majesty: Nay, out of common Prudence and meer Interest, as they are, not only by the Irresistible Power of his Arm, but the strong, tho' gentle Efficacy of his Gospel, in all these confirm'd and upheld and sustain'd.

Psalm. cxliv.
2-

Certainly the first thing from Princes expected, is, that they should duly consider and lay to Heart, this their so absolute Dependance: That they should have not only a General and Habitual Knowledge, but an Actual Sense and Distinct Acknowledgment, not only from whom they receiv'd their Crowns, but who it is that keeps 'em on, and makes 'em flourish on their Heads. Who it is, that not only gives them a mighty People, *but subdues that People under them.* For were there not an Invisible Hand, to bridle and over-rule Men's head-strong Passions and disorderly Affections, to restrain and hold in the impetuous Tide of Pride, Avarice, Ambition and Revenge; not the strongest Fence of Humane Force or Policy, not the Justice or
Wisdom

Wisdom of any Administration could be able to keep 'em within any just Bounds; or hinder them from turning all things into Anarchy and Confusion. But, *He that stills the Rage of the Sea, and the Noise of its Waves,* he alone is able to calm the Rage, and quiet the Madneß of the People. They should likewise reflect, who it is that Protects them from Foreign Force, that gives either the Security of Peace, or the Glory of Victory. And who is he, but that great King, who can *refrain the Spirits of Princes;* so strongly influence the Hearts of Men, that they shall not so much as desire the Land, tho' it lay open and naked and defenceless: Or if the most powerful Enemy should rage, and come up against it, *can put a Hook in his Nose, and a Bridle in his Lips, and turn him back the way that he came.* This is such a Security, as (without him) not the Conduct of Generals, nor the Courage of Soldiers, not Forts nor Castles, not Fleets nor Armies (not to mention Confederates or Allies, or the Staff of Egypt) can give. They must needs own therefore, That, as they are brought to the Throne by him, so by him also they are defended and kept safe in it: That, in both respects, *by him they Reign;* as to their Designation and Appointment by Christ, as he is the Eternal Wisdom; as to their Establishment and Continuance by the same Christ, as he is the Infinite Power of the Father. And this Consideration is questionless a just Reason, that to him who is the *Blessed and only Potentate,* all Derivative Power should do Homage, all the Sceptres of the Earth should bow.

Psa. lxxv. 7.

Psa. lxxvi. 5.

Exo. xxiv. 34.

2 Kin. xix. 28.

Isa. xxxvi. 6.

Prov. viii. 15.

1 Tim. vi. 15.

But

But besides this Universal Power of Christ, which extends itself equally to Believers and Infidels, as well to those that have not known him, as to those that worship him and call upon his Name, Christian Princes should consider, the more immediate Care, and peculiar Protection of Christ, under which they are; that their Throne is more strongly establish'd, and a willing and conscientious Submission to their Power, more effectually secur'd by the Laws of his Kingdom, than any of their own: That, besides the Positive and Express Precepts, particularly enjoining Subjection and Obedience, the universal Tendency of his Gospel, tho' design'd chiefly to bring them and all theirs to a more Lasting and Glorious Kingdom above; in the mean time directly promotes whatever makes for the Strength and Ornament, Safety and Prosperity of that, which by his Gift they at present enjoy below: By sweetning the Tempers, and composing the Spirits, and calming the Passions, and regulating the Appetites, and moderating the Desires, and allaying the Animosities of its Disciples: By enjoining Meekness and Gentleness, Mutual Forbearance and Condescension, Forgiveness of Enemies, and Love of all Mankind; the genuine Product of which, from a Natural Efficiency, as well as a Divine Benediction, are the Tranquillity and Union and Felicity of a State.

And ought not this Consideration to convince all Christian Potentates, that it is most Just and Reasonable, that They, in Return, should shew all possible Demonstrations of a Conscientious Care, and Zealous Con-

Concern for the Safety and Interest, the Advancement and Honour of this Kingdom of Christ, to which all their own Kingdoms owe so much of their Authority and Reverence, Peace and Quietness, Security and Preservation? Should they not think themselves ever oblig'd to keep up the just Awe and Veneration due to Religion? To vindicate its Truth from the insolent Attacks of Atheism, its Majesty from the Indignities of Prophaneness, and its Holiness from the *Overflowings* Pf. xviii. 3. of Ungodliness? To bring Piety and Virtue, which they alone can do, into Reputation and Honour, by their Countenance and Favour, and by discouraging and discountenancing Wickedness and Vice, to make them as Dishonourable among Men, as they are Hateful to God? And so to govern their People with Justice and Clemency, as ever to remember, that, with respect to the Great King, they themselves are but Fellow-Subjects, and to him responsible for the Usage of those who have, with them, an equal Right to the Everlasting Kingdom?

But in a more particular manner, they must needs think themselves obliged to be solicitous for the Good of that part of Christ's Church, over which he has delegated to them a Temporal Power; to reform, if there be necessity, (according to the Laws of Christ's Kingdom and their own) all Damnable Errors or Grievous Abuses in it; but where there is no such Necessity, but the Doctrines are entirely agreeable to the Word of God, and the Discipline founded upon Scripture-Rule and Apostolical Practice, and the Worship Solemn and Devout, Sober and Rational, Decent and Orderly.

Orderly and Edifying, equally distant from Slovenly Irreverence and Popish Superstition, there by all means to labour the Establishment, and be earnest for the Preservation of that Church. For such a Church will ever be the surest Friend and strongest Support of a State; and for that reason, will deserve the utmost Care and Favour and Protection from it: Will deserve to be warchfully guarded and strongly secur'd, not with the Offensive Arms of Violence or Persecution (far be that, which is so contrary to the Spirit of Christ, from any Society that calls it'self a Christian Church) yet surely, with the Defensive Arms of Prudence and Foresight and Prevention. By not suffering, if possible, them to have the Power, who may lie under the bare Suspicion only of not wanting the Will to Destroy it. Especially if *This Will* discovers itself in sticking at nothing to obtain *That Power*. If Men shall be found so eager of it as to venture to come at it, tho' by affronting the awful Majesty of God, and Profaning the most Solemn Mysteries of Religion, and complying with that, which if they themselves at other times have not call'd, yet they have patiently suffer'd, if not encouraged, others to call Idolatry. Thus qualifying themselves for a Trust by an Act, the Impiety and Hypocrisie of which ought to make 'em justly esteem'd utterly unfit ever to be Trusted. Surely it were not only a Security to a Church or State, but a great piece of Charity to such Men themselves (wherever any such are) to be hinder'd from purchasing a short-liv'd Honour or petty Preferment in one of the Kingdoms of this World, at the costly Price of
entirely

entirely forfeiting or manifestly endangering their Interest in the Kingdom of Christ. So far would it be from deserving the Name of Persecution, except from those who should account it Persecution to be debarr'd from the Power to Persecute.

In fine, the Preservation of the Church ought to be one of the Principallest Cares and Tenderest Concerns of a Christian Prince; nor should he think the Power by Christ committed to him can any way be better employ'd, than in Protecting and Cherishing that Body of which Christ himself is the Head.

Be this in general spoken of the Influence that Christ's Kingdom ought to have over Christian Princes.

But let Us particularly, who live under so Gracious a Government, be thankful to God that We have no Occasion, on this Subject, for Wishes or Exhortations; Our Business must be only Congratulations and Acknowledgments; whilst we behold on the Throne a Princess, who, as She is most tenderly concern'd for the Prosperity of her People, so She evidently shews, that She Understands the True and Surest Means to obtain it; Which are the Encouragement of Religion and Virtue, and as Affectionate a Care of That Church into which she was Baptiz'd, as That Country in which she was Born; proceeding from a Heart as Truly Christian, as it is Entirely *English*. Whose unaffected Piety and Zeal for God's Glory, and Exercise of all Princely Virtues and Christian Graces, give us just Ground to hope that God will bless Us by continuing Her long, to be as Glorious a Defender, as she ever has been a Constant Professor of the Faith;

E

and

and as Tender a Nursing Mother now, as she ever was before a Dutiful Daughter of the Church; Relieving it by her Bounty, and Supporting it by her Power, as much as she always Instructed it by her Example, and Adorn'd it by her Piety. And may that Church so Graciously Supported and Firmly Establish'd, be also, as to the Purity of its Doctrine, and the Decency of its Worship, and the Loyalty of its Principles, like its great Defender under Christ, *Semper Eadem*. A Wish Devoutly to be made for a Person or a Community that Can, here below, receive no Alterations but for the Worse.

But wherein does a Prince's Gracious Care, and Earnest Concern for the People's Happiness more conspicuously appear, than in setting over them such Honourable Judges as *Jethro* describes, and We behold, *Able Men, such as fear God, Men of Truth, hating Covetousness?* And over such, the Consideration of Christ's Eternal Kingdom must needs have a very Powerful Influence; and God expects it should: For as soon as he had declar'd, *I have set my King on my Holy Hill of Sion;* he immediately subjoins, *Be wise now therefore, O ye Kings, be instructed ye that are Judges of the Earth:* Be instructed, that ye are accountable not only to that Earthly Prince from whom your Authority is immediately receiv'd, but also, and chiefly to that Sovereign Lord, who is the Original and Fountain of all Justice and Power, for whom Ye Judge; Ye Judge not for Man, but the Lord; and who is with You in the Judgment; and whose the Judgment is, For the Judgment is God's. But He has said, *That Ye are Gods,* has

Exo. xviii.
21.

Psal. ii.

2 Chr. xix.
6.

Deu. i. 17.

Psal. xxxii.
7.

has set You to be in His stead to the People, Visibly to Represent His Majesty, and to Administer His Justice, and to Execute His Power. Whom therefore He has so highly honour'd, as to call by His Own Name, and to constitute Representatives of His Own Person; ought not They to use all possible Endeavours to be as like as is possible, in Inward Rectitude and Holiness to him, whose Outward Image and Supercription they bear? *Wherefore now let the Fear of the Lord be upon you, and* ^{2 Chron. xix. 7.} *take heed, and do it.* Set before your Eyes for your Imitation, the Divine Perfections of the Judge of the whole Earth: *For there is no Iniquity with the Lord our God, nor respect of Persons, nor taking of Gifts.* And now behold, *God standeth in the Congregation of Princes, and is* ^{Pf. lxxxiii.} *a Judge among the gods!* He beholds even now, How that High Character with which he Has dignify'd You, is Sustain'd; How His Majesty is Represented, and His Justice Dispens'd; and if Ye acquit your selves as Gods, if Ye Judge like God here, Ye shall Judge with Him hereafter. As for others, whoever they are, who being *Ministers of His Kingdom, do not Judge aright, Hor-* ^{Wisd. vi. 4, 5, 6.} *ribly and speedily shall He come upon Them; for a sharp Judgment shall be to them in High Places, and Mighty Men shall be Mightily tormented.* But they who have now a Just Regard to the Invisible Presence of Christ their King, and Act with a farther Prospect of that Visible and Glorious Appearance of His, when He shall come with Thousands of His Saints, to Judge the World; shall most assuredly Then, not only with Applause and Honour, be *Clear when they are Judged,* but, after that, shall be advanc'd to a much Higher Tribu-

Tribunal, than Ever in This World they grac'd, shall be Assessors to the Eternal King, shall sit as Judges, with all the Saints of GOD; while the Angels themselves shall attend but as Officers of the Court, and Executioners of its Irreversible Decrees. *In the time of their Visitation They shall shine, They shall Judge the Nations, and have Dominion over the People, and their Lord shall Reign for ever.*

Wisd. iii.
7, 8.

To whom, even unto Thee, who art the King of Glory,
O CHRIST, together with the FATHER
and the HOLY GHOST, be ascrib'd, as is
most due, all Honour, Power, Might, Majesty and
Dominion, both now and for Evermore. Amen.

F I N I S.

A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

OF the *Imitation of Christ*. A Sermon Preach'd (before the Queen at the Bath) by Richard Duke, Prebendary of Gloucester, and Rector of Blaby, Leicestershire, Publish'd by Her Majesty's Especial Command.